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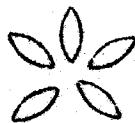
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BERL KATZNELSON

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BERL - THE HALUTZ OF HALUTZIM,
TRUSTEE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE,
LAND AND SPIRIT,
THE VISIONARY AND TEACHER.
THE PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE OF
THE WORKERS OF PALESTINE.

- D. BEN-GURION



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B E R L K A T Z N E L S O N

"Choose yourself a teacher," is a very ancient precept which is perhaps the very foundation of the historical Jewish ethos. If a teacher is one whom we voluntarily and joyfully grant the right to guide us and to judge us, Berl Katznelson was to many of his own and the later generations in Zionism the superb teacher.

To convey the aroma of Berl Katznelson's personality to those to whom it was only a honored name, is quite a difficult task. It is much easier to recite the bare facts of his biography. He was born in 1887 in Bobruisk, a small town in what is now the White Russian Soviet Republic; on the map of the diaspora, White Russia is a province of the land of the "Lithuanians" (Litvaks). Berl Katznelson was in many respects a representative and exemplary Lithuanian Jew: Soberminded, intolerant of cant, suspicious of the authority of power or fashion, humorous towards himself, and tenderly devoted only to those truths which have survived the scrutiny of mind and heart. He was raised in a traditional home where the family shared in common an eager interest in the Jewish and general social problems of the time. In later years, on coming across some old letters of his father, which he found in a home of a relative in this country, he was amazed at the extent to which his father's Zionism had been permeated with the socialist vision. Like his beloved teacher, Nachman Syrkin, Berl Katznelson enjoyed tracing his own national and social ideas to distant sources. It fascinated him to find the synthesis of the yearning for Jewish regeneration and the striving for a new social order imbedded in the mainstream of Jewish history -- as well as in the tradition of his own family.

Like many young East European Jews in the beginning of our century, Berl Katznelson at a very early age began to participate in social movements. At the age of 15 he was a member of one of the Zionist-Socialist groups which, unaware of each other's existence, were at that time springing up in Russia, in Galicia, even in the United States. He was unhappy and restless in the Zionist movement of those days. It was then that he was first struck by a paradox which continued to perplex him all his life. Zionism is and cannot be anything but a revolutionary in temperament. In his quest for a movement which will combine a radical approach to the Jewish problem with the revolutionary mentality which is indispensable to such a task Berl Katznelson for several years wandered from one political group to another - always remaining within the orbit of the nationalist sector of the Jewish Socialist movement.

At the age of 22 Berl Katznelson reached the end of his *wanderjahre*. Behind him were political parties, debating groups, "ideologies" and "programs". Berl Katznelson had chosen the narrow and difficult path of direct personal Zionist action which was at that time the path of lifelong dedication to a cause with little if any hope of success. In 1909 Berl Katznelson came to Palestine and there he remained until the end. During his first ten years in Palestine he was an agricultural worker. He was one of the obscure community of several hundred men and women who felt that the most important contribution that they could make to Zionism was this: To train themselves as competent productive tillers of the soil. Before Zionism could come forward with its solution of the Jewish problem it had to prove that the Jewish people

still possessed the physical and moral fitness necessary for pioneering under the most unfavorable circumstances. This task the men of the Second Aliya took upon themselves. Berl Katznelson was one of the most clear-sighted, articulate, and personally exemplary members of that generation.

When Nachman Syrkin visited Palestine in 1920 he said: "The only fault with the *kvutzot* is that we havn't a thousand *kvutzot*". The achievements of the Second Aliya had proved beyond doubt that it was possible to create in Palestine a healthy and productive Jewish community.

Now it only remained to increase a thousandfold the efforts of the Second Aliya. This task met with tremendous obstacles from within the Zionist movement. Again the revolutionary compulsions of the Zionist idea clashed with the prejudices and mental sloth of its adherents. It took not a few years and many battles at Zionist Congresses until the Zionist movement began to yield to the vision of its pioneers. Years passed before the Zionist movement accepted completely the Jewish National Fund as the chief instrument of land settlement; before the labor settlements ceased to be regarded as costly "social experiments" doomed to the same fate as similar "utopian schemes" in other countries; before the principle of Jewish immigration under all circumstances was accepted as the be-all and end-all of the entire Zionist movement.

In these efforts to imbue the Zionist movement with its values of *halutziut*, Berl Katznelson took a leading part. He was a formidable opponent of the complacent and lazy minded in Zionism because he waged this fight not as a partisan representative of special interests, but as an interpreter and defender of the essence of Zionism, of its inner logic, of its inherent needs and commandments.

But no less significant was the role that Berl Katznelsion played within the Labor movement. For there too were pitfalls and dangers to be overcome. Labor Zionism is an idea in which mingle several strains, national, social and merely sectarian. There was the danger that the "central idea" of the Palestine Labor movement would be lost in the strain to satisfy all the aspirations of the movement and its constituent groups. Berl Katznelsion never wearied of reminding the movement, and particularly its youth, that "the emancipation of the Jewish workers is unthinkable without the emancipation of the Jewish people from the galut."

Socialist Zionism was conceived in the sin of "heresy". Before the first pioneers could set foot on the soil of Palestine they had to shake off the laming authority of the Socialist orthodoxy of the time. Only when a young Jew ceased to be troubled by the arbitrary taboos of the official Socialist decalogue, and turned his attention to the unique pattern of the Jewish problem and gained the courage to regard his passion for national immortality as a legitimate desire requiring no apology, was he ready for the act of halutziut. And halutziut, Berl Katznelsion never ceased repeating, is much more than mere immigration, even than the establishment of a politically autonomous Jewish community in Palestine. A Jewish people and a Jewish civilization must be moulded from the wreckage of persecutions and expulsions, voluntary and forced assimilation, from the debris of broken and dying traditions. A balanced economy must be built by our own hands from the bottom to the top, a dead language must be fashioned into a precise instrument of expression and communication, all that is vital in the Jewish heritage must be tenderly transplanted to a new soil, such atrophied sentiments as the love of country and the national past must be reborn in the soul of the modern Jew, a more instrumental conception of politics, which weighs every gain and loss in terms of the national interest must be learned by the children of the old and the new ghetto.

During the quarter of a century of his public activity the Palestine Labor Movement grew constantly in numbers and diversity. What made Berl Katznelsion unique as a leader and a teacher is that he exerted so deep an influence upon so heterogeneous a movement as ours without using any of the devices of the modern propaganda, without ever sounding a false note, without ever striking a heroic pose. We are living in a military age, the terminology of the battlefield is detectable even in the vocabulary of unquestionably sincere liberals. Berl Katznelsion always remained a civilian - i. e., one who knew and tried to remind others that unless politics is regarded as an instrument only it is likely to defeat the loftiest ends which it may pretend to serve, that revolution is only the

midwife of history, and that our best energies must be devoted to guard and mend the traditions and institutions which help to make our everyday life endurable and lend it some meaning and dignity. He was no spell-binder, no coiner of martial slogans to the sound of which anonymous battalions keep time. Even when speaking to thousands he remained one of them, making his listeners share his thoughts, his doubts, his hard won faith - and humbly responding to theirs. Whether in conversation with a friend, in public utterance or on the printed page he always remained the same person. And it is this Berl Katznelson whom we shall never forget - this serenity charged with anxiety, this unrest restrained by a faith which nothing could shake, this firmness which was so compelling because one was always aware of the gentleness from which it issued.

BERL KATZNELSON'S HERITAGE

He bequeathed to us no "ideology" and no "theory". In the years of his childhood and early youth, making the rounds from Party to Party (as he recounts in his autobiographic sketch, "My Way to Palestine"), he was indeed accounted one of the "young intellectuals." He would sometimes tell you himself that he had been one of the creators of a theory widely known in those years - the theory of "non-proletarization". But by his twentieth year these things were all behind him. He regarded with greatest mistrust the Jewish party doctrinist.

But if there was no such thing as a Katznelson "theory", there certainly did exist a style of thinking characteristic of Berl Katznelson. It is not difficult to find the key to this seemingly loose, unschematic thought process.

Two prophetic sayings always quoted by him are the clue to Berl Katznelson's basic Jewish feeling, the feeling which led him to Palestine and stayed with him to his last day.

"From the years," he says in one of his Discussions with the Youth, "when, pushing against a stone wall, I wandered from movement to movement, to the day I renounced the galut, a single text, more bitter than death, pounds within me: "And slaves shalt thou be unto the nations." To which the Rav added, "This word do I fear.", "

This fear did not begin to torment him in 1941, at the time the words were spoken. It had pursued him since the earliest days of his youth, those days of gleaming-

white hope of revolution and progress, when a new world seemed to be dawning. I recall a moment at a session of the labor fraction at the last Zionist Congress, in the August days just preceding the outbreak of the second World War. A Polish comrade, speaking with great pathos, was demanding help from the world movement for the political work of his party. Berl Katznelson sat there, trembling with fear - and bitterness. "What's he talking about? Don't they sense what is about to happen to us, that the coming war means the end of east-European Jewry? Why don't they think instead about rescuing a few thousand people - anyway, as many as possible - before the disaster occurs?"

Out of this melancholy premonition stemmed the second basic motif: "The brand plucked from the fire." For him this meant every soul, every drop of Jewish energy, every ounce of labor potential, every bit of will-to-live that could be salvaged from a galut doomed to annihilation. When in his travels he met a young Jew with an open countenance, with clear-seeing eyes, with character, his eyes would caress him with fatherly joy and concern. For he saw the flames licking in from every side, threatening the treasures of generations; he saw physical annihilation and inner debasement - and here another brand plucked from the pyre.

He knew that dangers threatened the brand once saved. The danger he feared most was that of the "Parisian designer", the creator of ideational modes to which Jewish reality, Jewish experiences and emotions were supposed to conform. This had brought to our world the "Slavery within revolt" from which not even those who are devoting their lives to the building of a new Jewish society and culture are free.

His keen eye sought everywhere for traces of this slavery. He discovered them in political slogans imported in their entirety from foreign environments into whose pattern our own politics were to be forced (a "People's Front" opposed to a "broad Zionist coalition", "class struggle" against the declassed Jewish middle-class paupers), in adulation of every modishly revolutionary novel and neglect of the original Hebrew literature flowing from deep Jewish wellsprings, in the "snobbishness" of a particular type of halutz who does not see his brother and potential comrade in the impoverished artisan and tradesman. He was completely free of this revolutionary "snobbishness". Consequently, nowhere was he a stranger. He, the pedantic man of principle, who never looked back upon what he had left behind, was easily able to find a common language with the Jews of an older generation, with a truly upright man, with a popular Bundist who had not yet lost the "odor" of his origins, with a Jewish proprietor in whom there still lived a sense of duty. For him love of his mother tongue was not simply the reverse.

side of hatred of the "holy tongue". He was the exemplary Jewish man of his people and Jewish man of the world.

From his twenty-second to his fifty-seventh year he was bound to the Palestine workers' movement. He participated in its first steps; he was privileged to see it in full bloom. He was proud of its achievements. They were a proof to him that nothing can impede a mighty will whose persistence is nourished by deepest needs. If we, the weak and helpless, were able to accomplish all of this, he would often say, there is good reason to hope...But he was also filled with fear of those atavistic disruptive forces contained even in a movement of reconstruction. "Freedom of discussion and unity of deeds" was the creative path of the Palestine labor movement. In sorrow and fear he witnessed the strivings of sections of the movement to become the totality, in the process tearing asunder the indivisible web created through so much effort, at the cost of so many blunders, mistakes and sacrifices. Katznelsion always reminded the Jewish worker in Palestine that his liberation was dependent upon a pre-condition - the liberation of the Jewish nation from its galut. His strength lies in unity, the unity of vision and deed. A lurking danger besets his path in the form of exclusive, disruptive imported programs.

These are the fundamental perceptions and concerns of his speeches and writings. But they are not isolated from the life of the world-at-large and the Jewish world. One is simply overwhelmed at the scope of associations which the slightest "local" matter is likely to evoke in him. This man of the movement is never simply a movement man. Whatever he says, and to whomever he speaks, he remains a Jewish man, rooted in the culture of Jewish generations, the man for whom Bible and Midrash, medieval song and chronicle, the blunderings of Haskala and the searchings of the Jewish will for national rebirth, the new Hebrew and Yiddish word, revolutionary proclamation and folk song constitute a single large, meaningful world - his world.

Shlomo Grodzensky

MY WAY TO ERETZ YISRAEL - BERL KATZNELSON

A Biographical Note

Berl ("Beri", as his father called him) Katznelson was born in Bobruisk at the beginning of 1886. From his earliest days, he displayed unrivalled talents. The margins in the books belonging to his father's extensive library are filled with notes in the youth's handwriting, which indicate a lively interest in all aspects of Hebrew literature. He studied in his home town, and from his youth upwards he associated with the intellectuals of Bobruisk, who were older than he, and who prophesied a great future for him. Kieve, Poltava -- these mark the various stages in his studies and the years of experience during his manhood. For some time, by dint of various enquiries, he got into close touch with the members of "Vorozhdenie" -- Social Revolutionaries. He was even a delegate to their Conference in 1905 at Kortzi, but later on he broke away from them.

On the 31st of Ellul, 1908, he came to Eretz Yisrael. He worked in Petach Tikva and Ain Ganim. It was in Ain Ganim that for the first time he met A. D. Gordon and Haim Brenner. He worked in Dagania, Havat Kinneret, Ben Shemen and at the beginning of the last war in Atarot. During the war, he was together with a group of chaverim who were vegetable-growers in Jerusalem. He volunteered for the first Jewish Legion.

In the years before the first World War, he founded and directed the Mobile Agricultural Library, of which several books later formed the basis of the Central Library of the Histadrut. He was one of the founders of the Workers' Committee of the Galilee, which formed the nucleus of the present agricultural organization, and also of the United Agricultural Workers' Committee of Judea. He was also one of the founders of HaMashbir, the cooperative purchasing agency of the Histadrut, and its chief adviser for many years. He sponsored the idea of the Workers' Bank and was on its Board of Directors. He was one of the originators of the United Avoda, the Jewish labor party in Eretz Yisrael which later joined with Hapoel Hatzair to form the Mapai - Eretz Yisrael Labor Party. The monthly journal "Hadama" - The Earth - which was edited by Brenner, was founded by Berl. The "Kuntress" was also his idea, and he was its editor for many years. He was one of the founders of the Histadrut and the first agricultural organization, a member of the first delegation to the United States in 1921, and went to the countries outside of Eretz Yisrael on several occasions, representing the Histadrut, and so came into contact with the most famous politicians and men of letters.

From the time of the Twelfth Zionist Congress, he was a delegate to all the Congresses which followed; a delegate to the London Conference in 1921, and a member of the Political Committee of the Zionist Organization in London after the riots of 1929.

He was on the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund and a member of the Executive Committee of the Hebrew University. He edited several publications; "BaAvoda", "HaKvutza", "Yalkut Achdut HaAvoda", "Chevra", "HaKibbutz", etc. He conceived the idea of a daily paper for the workers, established it, and was the very first editor of the "DAVAR". Berl founded and organized the publishing department of the Histadrut - "Am Oved". He wrote a great deal, and was, in fact, one of the mainstays of proletarian literature and one of its guides. One of the deep thinkers of the Zionist Movement, his voice was heard above all the groups and factions. His first articles were printed in "HaPoel Hatzair" in 1921. While working in agriculture he published articles about the vegetable nursery of Eliezer Yaffe, and in "HaSadeh" on the subject of vegetable growing -- articles which aroused great interest among those engaged in this occupation. During the last few years, he devoted himself specifically to educational work in the Histadrut, and put into it the best of his strength and energy. He worked on many projects, including a Histadrut Seminar or Shlichim in 1940 and a recent Mapai Seminar in 1944, but lately devoting most of his time to "Am Oved", and visualized them as constituting a primary educational and cultural factor in the future.

The entire Yishuv was paralyzed upon hearing the news of Berl's death in August, 1944. He had proven himself to be the foremost leader of the Yishuv - as philosopher of the Jewish labor movement, mentor and guide of Eretz Yisrael youth movement, adviser to the cooperative settlement organizations, participant in the Histadrut in all of its various phases of activity and organization, colleague in the rejuvenation of Jewish culture and literature, and architect of the Jewish Cooperative Commonwealth in the making.

* * *

MY YOUTH AT HOME

I was twenty-two years old when I went to Eretz Yisrael, and it took fifteen years before I finally did go -- so you can easily work out at what age my connection with Eretz Yisrael was established. I was brought up in a Jewish family which stood on the borderline between tradition and modern ideas. In my education, there were already some elements of the new Hebrew education which was then beginning to develop and in the spreading of which my father played a considerable part. From my grandparents I received some concepts of the ordinary orthodox child, which I absorbed willingly. At the same time, I was drawn into the atmosphere of the generation immediately preceding mine, which was rationalist, with novel and firm convictions, and a bitter hatred of the then existing order.

One of the great innovations which my father introduced, was that, at the age of seven-and-a-half or eight, I was given as a present -- a children's book. You must realize that in those days - the nineties of the last century - there were no children's books to speak of. The majority of the few children's books available were not written in Hebrew. My father, however, who was a born educational reformer, brought me a small reader in Hebrew.

It was a collection of children's stories, each one on one of the Ten Commandments. There was one on Shabbat. It was really folklore -- about how a Tzaddik once travelled through the desert with a caravan of Moslems; how he naturally decided not to move on Shabbat, when Friday night approached. So he remained by himself, an easy prey for the wild beasts. Suddenly a lion approached, the Tzaddik was convinced his end had come, but the lion lay down at his feet, and watched over him until Shabbat was over, when the Tzaddik rode on the lion until he caught up with the caravan. The concluding sentence of the story said, that the descendants of the Tzaddik lived in Hebron up to the present day. When I read this sentence I began to cry -- I do not know whether it was out of joy or sadness. But it became clear to me on that day that Eretz Yisrael was not a matter of "Olam Haba", was not a mystical concept, but was a reality of this world. This made me very happy. Then I reasoned further: "If the descendants of that Rabbi can live in Eretz Yisrael, why can't I...?" This story brought about a revolution in my world, and my connection with a "real" Eretz Yisrael began to form itself there and then.

FIRST CONTACTS WITH ERETZ YISRAEL

Shortly afterwards, my father gave me another book -- a story by az"r (Alexander Siskind Rabinowitz). It was one of the very first Hebrew stories on the Biluim. It told of the sons of two families, one of whom was strictly orthodox, adhered to tradition, went to Cheder and studied the Torah; the other boy came from a family of what were then called "Jewish aristocrats", i.e., Jews who sent their children to the non-Jewish Gymnasium (High School). Now, the boy who grew up among non-Jewish children at the Gymnasium, once heard about Eretz Yisrael, and began to ponder about the fate of the Jews. The two afterwards met in Eretz Yisrael -- one was a worker, the other a teacher. This story brought the idea of going to Palestine to my mind a second time, and drove it home much more forcibly.

How did I envisage going to Eretz Yisrael then, and what did I imagine I would do there? Firstly, I was naturally attracted by the idea of a Jewish farmer working on the soil of Eretz Yisrael. But the second idea was perhaps still more attractive. My secret ideal was to become a station-master in Eretz Yisrael, not say, a policeman or soldier, because the concept of a Jewish State was represented in my mind by a railway; to my mind this was certainly a political issue.

There was another factor. A friend of my father's who came to visit us very often, had been a worker in Eretz Yisrael at the time when Rehovot was built. When he returned to Russia, he remained an agriculturalist! One would often see him drive a dung-cart through the streets of the town. For the first time, I saw before me a man who had actually been to Eretz Yisrael.

A second contact I had through letters received by a Jew in our town from his son-in-law who had gone to Palestine as a worker. They expressed a great love of Hebrew and Eretz Yisrael.

He was building himself a house, and for this purpose employed a young non-Jewish laborer. I was very cosmopolitan then, and dreamed I would show this boy how Jews lived in Eretz Yisrael, show him a picture of a Jewish house in Eretz Yisrael.

FIRST CONTACTS WITH SOCIALISM

I was thrown into a very grave inner conflict -- at least from a Jewish point of view -- when, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I was introduced to Marxist ideology. At that time, I was going from town to town to study. Right from the beginning I could see no contradiction between Marxism and Zionism -- on the contrary, it somehow seemed to enrich my Zionist ideology. I recollect reading a book by a Russian economist, describing the transition in England from feudalism to industrialism, and how the industrial revolution had come about. I went into this thoroughly, and I came to realize how capitalism impoverishes and destroys the masses. While I was thus reading about the English working-class, a thought entered my mind which worried me very much. I trembled to think of the consequences of an industrial revolution in Russia, and especially the fate of the Jews, if in England the transition from one economic phase to another had brought such misery and destruction in its wake. This thought fortified my Zionist convictions in no small measure.

The idea that Zionism ought to be based on an economic theory began to gain wide currency. This was not a matter of an individual here and there. All over Russia, Jewish youngsters racked their brains in their efforts to reconcile Socialist philosophy with Zionism. There were many who considered that it was essential to find a new theoretical foundation for Zionism in that new world of ideas.

DIFFERENT ZIONIST TRENDS

Soon I was no longer satisfied with a superficial theoretical explanation of Zionism. I searched for something deeper. I sought an answer to many serious issues -- real and true answers. At that time the great controversy between Herzl and Ahad Haam was in full swing. During that controversy, an exceptionally able man, who was to be almost an example of firm Zionist convictions, and perhaps the first Jew in Russia to study agriculture at a Russian University (he was preparing to live in Eretz Yisrael) once, in a lecture, expounded thoughts which the audience probably did not grasp, but which I felt to be terrible heresy. The theory he put forward was that of Ahad Ha-am, and I sensed an admission that Zionism could not solve the Jewish problem. Perhaps the man himself did not realize the inference that could be drawn from his train of thought; but for me this was the beginning of another bitter mental conflict. I began to ask myself whether or not Zionism could solve the Jewish question; and if not, whether I could then still remain a Zionist. Thus at the age of fifteen, I entered into a period of uninterrupted inner struggle for the justification of Zionism, Judaism, and all other correlated issues.

* I DECIDE TO GO TO PALESTINE *

At that time (1905) there was a trend away from Hebrew literature. There was a great disappointment in Hebrew, and Hebrew books and publications ceased to appear. It was then that Yiddish literature flourished for a short time. I was very doubtful as to whether Hebrew had any function to fulfill in the life of the Jewish people. I loved Yiddish and Yiddish literature very much -- but I could not bring myself to break with Hebrew, although this was illogical. It appeared logical to say that the masses had no need for Hebrew. They had no opportunity of knowing or learning Hebrew. But still, I somehow could not make up my mind about Hebrew finally.

I would often listen to the discussions and conversation in that circle of young writers, many of whom are now regarded as having been in the front rank of Hebrew literature. I witnessed the ease and lightheartedness with which men who had been bred and educated in Hebrew literature were giving up Hebrew. I left that circle and said to myself: "This matter is finished for me. I shall never resign myself to the renunciation of Hebrew."

At that time, my final decision was taken both on Hebrew and on Palestine. I wish to emphasize again, that I did not arrive at this decision on the basis of Zionist convictions, but out of a feeling of bitter humiliation and obstinacy. I scorned to be a partner to the trend of my generation, who lacked even the courage and strength to die in dignity.

* ALIENATION AMONG THE PARTIES *
* FROM HEBREW LITERATURE AND CULTURE *

Along with the decision to go to Palestine, I also decided that I had to get used to physical work before I went to Palestine. This was long before Kibbutzei Hachshara existed. I decided that I had to get such training that I would be able to earn a living in Palestine. I again left friends and political circles, and started to wander from place to place in search of work.

First, I went to work with a plumber; then I worked for a smith in another town. From there I went to Odessa, where I hoped to get into the famous Jewish Trade School "Trud"; it was considered a great privilege to be accepted there. After many difficulties, I managed to get accepted, and started work as a blacksmith.

FROM HIS WRITINGS

In contrast to the military type of education, we see in our own youth organizations - particularly in our party youth - a type of "intellectual" education given exclusively through the media of lectures, discussions, and reading circles. In this type of education "ideology" is everything. It is worthwhile to examine stringently the direction of this "ideological" education and see whether it does not lead to over-simplification, if it does not degenerate into meaningless verbalism and barren scholastic logic-chopping. However, this "ideological" education is inadequate even in its most perfected form. Man thrives not only on mental activity. A serious movement should strive to embrace the entire life of its adherents for there is no real education where his emotions, senses, and will are neglected for purely cerebral gymnastics. One must harmonize, to use the symbols coined by Bialik, the "legend" of a movement with its "law". If a movement is guided by a living idea and not mummified doctrines, that idea must flow incessantly in all the arteries of the movement, guide it in both important and petty matters, be embodied in individual and social patterns of behavior, speak in its songs, its slogans, in every day conversation.

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What ethical principle concedes the right of existence to every living creature except the Jew? What is the meaning of this piety so widespread among certain Jews, so fanatic and upright, so alert and sensitive to every injury, to every discrimination, so compassionate with all of mankind, but so deaf and blind and insensitive to one tragedy - the Jewish tragedy? Is it foolish piety -- just that? Or is it rather a cowardly escape from the camp of the persecuted and the oppressed to an environment more secure?

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Mutual cooperation, that is the foundation of socialist ethics in the relations of man and nation. The individual is not a means or a tool to be used by another more powerful individual. Your blood is not more precious than mine. The sentiment now so widespread that someone's blood - Russia's blood, Arabia's blood, is more precious is the complete negation of socialist ethics. We do not live by the grace of others or for the sake of others. Our right to live lies within ourselves.

Thus I passed a very long period of Hachshara. In spite of all my admiration for the men of the Russian Revolution, the concept of a "Jewish worker in Palestine" was, to my mind, still the loftiest ideal toward which one could strive, almost too high to be completely attained.

* ON THE BOAT *

I left for Palestine at long last. On the way, I met any number of people who "warned" me against Palestine. It was so unusual -- to go to Palestine was almost as bad as committing suicide. When I arrived in Odessa, I went to stay at a well-known hotel. It is impossible for me to describe how repulsive it became for me to live among these people who had returned from Palestine. It was not that I had not known before that many did return -- but I did not like the people personally; they appeared to me as traitors. They boasted about themselves and lied about Palestine.

The boat was full of people going to Palestine. But out of all of them, only two families actually stayed in Palestine. I emphasize that these were the only ones to remain, because it is so characteristic of the Second Aliya. It was quite usual for people to come on one boat, and return by the next, all within a week.

* MY FIRST DAY IN PALESTINE *

Whatever happened to me on that day, seemed to urge me to muster up all my courage and hope. When the ship approached the harbor of Jaffa, many people were there to meet us; some even came toward us in little boats. I am utterly unable to convey to you the scene of that "welcome". The first question on all sides was: "What did you come for?", This was immediately followed by lies about Palestine, and mocking ridicule for those foolish greenhorns who had come.....

Actually the moment I set foot in Palestine, I felt certain that my wanderings had come to an end! All that had been before, was now done with. This is no idle boast. I know that for me the problem of Palestine was finally settled on the day I landed in the country. I knew there was no other place for me.

LAW AND LEGEND IN YOUTH MOVEMENTS

I have heard our youth singing the "Sailors' Song". Songs of the sea are very appropriate at present. Our future lies not only upon the land. The sea is our western boundary and we shall certainly raise generations of sailors, swimmers, and fishers. More than that, across the sea are living our brothers for whom we are waiting. This, more than scenic beauty, more than aquatic sports, more than economic possibilities, should inspire us when thinking of the sea. The sea separates brother from brother; the sea is the "path upon which the redeemer shall pass - our eyes are lifted daily to the boats that are nearing shore. Whom do they carry? Will the gates be open for them? That is our main question, that is our Chalutzia, that is our political statesmanship, that is our poetry. Are we not filled with anxiety for the fate of the illegal immigrant as he nears the shores of the land he longs for? Can we conceive a more heartrending ballad, then the as yet unwritten ballad of the youthful lives, who upon reaching these shores were smashed against its rocks? Is there a more gripping and faith-inspiring image than that of a caravan of chalutzim on their way to this land?

OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Creative revolutionaries do not throw the cultural heritage of ages into the dust-bin. They examine and scrutinize, accept and reject. At times they may add to an accepted tradition. At times they descend into ruined grottos, excavate, remove the dust from that which had lain in forgetfulness, resuscitate old traditions which may stimulate the new generations. Is it revolutionary to look down upon an old and profound national tradition which can educate man and train him for his future tasks?

We must determine the values of the present and of the past with our own eyes and examine them from the viewpoint of our vital needs, from the viewpoint of progress toward our future.

From fathers to sons, throughout all the generations the exodus from Egypt is related as a personal reminiscence thereby retaining its original lustre. "In every generation must every man regard himself as if he personally were redeemed from Egypt." This is the peak of historic consciousness and history has no example of a greater fusion of individual with group than this ancient pedagogic command... And I do not know of any other ancient memory so entirely a symbol of our present and future, as the "memory of the exodus from Egypt."